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REMARKS

OF THE

HON. D. M'CONAUGHEY,
SENATOR FROM ADAMS AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES,ON THE RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE ACTION OF THE
UNITED STATES SENATE IN REINSTATING E. M.
STANTON AS SECRETARY OF WAR.

DELIVERED JANUARY 21, 1868.

Mr. DAVIS (of Berks) having in the course of his remarks spoken as follows:

"We know that sometimes a scavenger must be employed to do dirty work. But it is not customary among gentlemen to treat him as an equal, much less to eulogize him as a superior being."

"This base cruelty, committed by Edwin M. Stanton, will cling to him living, like the poisoned shirt, and dying, sink him deeper in the bottomless pit than ever was sunk an ordinary murderer."

Mr. M'CONAUGHEY. Mr. Speaker, the Senator from Berks [Mr. DAVIS] has well said, that, a scavenger is needed when dirty work is to be done. Sir, I will not dispute that proposition with him. He has demonstrated it now and here beyond all doubt. Sir, there must be something beneath all this bitter hatred—this malignity which is so intense and fearful that it would seem as if it could only have emanated from that being whose presence the Senator summoned into this Chamber, when he endeavored to solve his enigma. The spirit that is here exhibited is so malignant that it could only have emanated from those depths in which that spirit of evil, that great prototype and universal symbol of malignity delights to breathe and live. And, sir, to a careful and observant man there is something deeper than all this, underlying this vindictive ebullition. Why this hatred, why this animosity, why this spirit which in cold blood would strip the skin from the victim from his scalp to his toe! Sir, it is that spirit which is more dangerous to American liberty than anything else of which we have ever read or dreamed—the bitter malignity of political hatred. That spirit is more dangerous to the success of the cause, of republican

liberty, than all other adverse influences which it has to encounter.

When, sir, the future historian comes to write the name of Edwin M. Stanton among the great ones of the age, when he seeks a legend with which to express the character of that man, he will inscribe upon his historical monument these words: "This man loved his country more than party." There, sir, is the solution of the whole question. It is so this they hate him.

Sir, go back to 1860, to the epoch when rebellion threatened and the Government was under the administration of a Democratic President, Mr. Buchanan. Who were his counsellors? Democrats, all. What did they, sir, when the hour of peril came? Did they stand by the Government? What did his Democratic Secretary of the Treasury, Howell Cobb? He withdrew from his place in the cabinet "on account of his duty to Georgia." What did his Democratic Minister of War, John B. Floyd? After attempting to rob the Government of the arms for its defense, and thus securing to himself the unenviable epithet of 'the thief,' he withdrew "because the President declined to order the garrison from the harbor of Charleston altogether."

Sir, what did the Democratic Attorney General, Jeremiah S. Black, of Pennsylvania? He made vacant his office after seeking in a State paper to demonstrate that the Government could not coerce a State in order to crush rebellion and preserve its own existence. Sir, it was at that time that Mr. Buchanan, that poor, miserable, tottering old man at the helm of State, without moral courage enough to stand by the land which gave him birth, and invested him with the highest office in its gift, in his extremity called to his aid that noble and courageous man, Edwin M. Stan-

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ton. He invited him into his cabinet at the recommendation of Judge Black. He came at the summons and stood amid that band of conspirators, like an unwelcome spectre at a council. He told them to their teeth that they were the assassins of liberty, and that he would stand by the Government, let them do as they would. He held up that old man who would have fallen into the yawning gulf of perdition which gaped before him, had it not been for the brave and patriotic Stanton. There is one thing about this man's history that must have impressed every intelligent reader of American politics. At the close of Mr. Buchanan's administration, in the moment of imminent danger, he is called into the cabinet alone on account of his pre-eminent abilities. All through the administration of Mr. Lincoln he was his chosen and constant trusted counsellor and minister at the head of the department of war, both during his first term and his second, until stricken down by the hand of an assassin. And even then, when the apostate reached the Presidential chair, he leaned and relied upon the Secretary of War, sir, because of his prominent abilities which, during all these years of war and disorder, were of invaluable importance to the country.

Sir, I need nothing more than his public history, nothing more than the unwilling tribute from the Buchanan administration, from the present administration to signally the virtues and services of Edwin M. Stanton. Sir, it is because he would not abandon his country, because he stood by the country of his birth and his love in utter disregard of his olden party ties; it is for this reason that gentlemen on the other side of the chamber cannot find language to express their hatred of him. What does the Senator from Berks resort to in his vain effort to sustain the bill of indictment which he has brought against him? He resorts to the irresponsible and ephemeral writings of a newspaper correspondent. He takes up Mr. Brown, or Mr. Smith, or some other penny-a-liner who is engaged in correspondence with one of the city dailies—he produces him as his solitary witness against the man who, by the devotion of his great talents and years of unceasing labor, has proven his fidelity to the interests of this country, and who has stood through this war a monument of loyalty and dauntless courage and patriotic devotion. Sir, there is one characteristic of Edwin M. Stanton I admire above all others, and that is, that glorious backbone—that spirit of patriotic resolve—that firm, unflinching bravery—with which he stood, ever fearless and bold, to fight, and fall if need be, battling with the enemies of his country.

I was astounded, Mr. Speaker, that the gentleman should have read what he did in the audience of this Senate. When he was

rehearsing those deeds of horrid cruelty, he was reading to us the acts of his friends—of the members of his own political party, the Southern Democracy of this country—the aristocratic Democrats of this land—the men who have left a blot upon the American character, which all the waters of the earth cannot wash out.

Mr. BURNETT. I desire to ask the gentleman one question, if he believes the New York *Tribune* association would employ the services of a rebel for its correspondent during the rebellion?

Mr. MC CONAUGHEY. Not consciously, although I have no doubt that it did. But, sir, I believe I am not apprehended by the Senator [Mr. BURNETT]. I was speaking of the high-toned gentlemen who conducted the rebel prisons of the South; those prison pens which have become a part of the history of this rebellion; those prison pens of which Jefferson Davis, formerly a Democratic United States Senator, and the Democratic Lee, were not unconscious and not unknowing; those prisons, sir, which have stained with infamy the people of the South, who undertook to destroy this Republic, and erect upon its ruins a grander government; one which should have a black foundation and a white pinnacle; the same party that now in the North arrogates to itself the classic epithet of the White Man's Party.

Why, sir, the question involved here is one that ought not to have called for such a torrent of defamation upon the Minister of War. As I understand it, the question is simply this: Under the Constitution the President's cabinet advisers are to be appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate. Congress from time to time has made statutory regulations for carrying out that provision of the Constitution. The President is to nominate and the Senate is to confirm, if in its judgment it can approve.

Now, sir, Mr. Johnson undertook to suspend Mr. Stanton as Secretary of War from the exercise of his office for reasons which, under the Constitution, he presented as sufficient. But the Senate sitting upon the reasons assigned, has pronounced that they were not sufficient. And hence this din and outcry about a violation of the Constitution by the action of the Senate. Sir, I wish it to be known, when this country was in imminent danger, and when the issue came whether it should exist or not; when the question was whether this Republic, in addition to the other excellencies of human governments, had the inherent power which was necessary for its own maintenance against all enemies, external and internal—when that issue was to be decided there was in the Presidential chair a Democratic President. That question arose, and Mr. Buchanan, the then President, an-

sawed it thus. I read from his message, in December, 1860:

"The question fairly stated is, has the Constitution delegated to Congress the power to coerce a State into submission which has attempted to withdraw or has actually withdrawn from the confederacy. After much serious reflection I have arrived at the conclusion that no such power has been delegated to Congress, nor to any other department of the Federal Government."

Mr. BURNETT. I desire to interrupt the gentleman. Will the Senator allow me to ask it?

Mr. MC CONAUGHEY. If it is pertinent to the question I am discussing.

Mr. BURNETT. Did not the New York Tribune take the same position?

Mr. MC CONAUGHEY. I am not the keeper of the New York Tribune, and I would not be the keeper of the man who became bail for Jefferson Davis.

I was attempting to show the position of the Democratic party by the utterances of its President, when this issue was forced upon the country. "After much serious reflection I have arrived at the conclusion that no such power has been delegated to Congress nor to any other department of the Federal Government." Now, just at that crisis Mr. Stanton was called to advise the President. Mr. Stanton entertained no such doctrine.

He believed that this Government had the power to coerce a State; the people believed it, and the country believed it. And the strong arms of the noble men of this country made it a historical fact that this nation can and will coerce and suppress every power that would stand in the pathway of its progress.

Now, sir, I propose to look, for only one instant, at the attitude of the Democratic party four years later than the advent of the rebellion. I desire that history shall not be forgotten. And in this connection, I read from the speech of Henry Clay Dean, made in the Democratic National Convention, held at Chicago, in 1864:

"For three years Lincoln has been calling for men and with all the armies placed at his command he has failed, failed, failed; such a failure has never been known, such a destruction of human life has never been known since the destruction of Sennacherib by the breath of the Almighty."

This is the charge made by one of its leaders, who was cheered to the echo in that Democratic National Convention, in the midst of a terrible war when the existence of the nation had become a question of doubt, and the Government was struggling for life.

I read further from his speech:

"Still the monster usurper wanted more men for his slaughter pens. Ever since the usurper, traitor, and tyrant had occupied the Pres-

idential chair, the Republican party shouted war to the knife and the knife to the hilt! Blood had flown in torrents, and yet the thirst of the old monster was not quenched. His cry was for more blood."

That is but one of the many like harangues that were freely uttered in that convention. And the resolutions breathed the same spirit. I will ask the Clerk to read the second resolution, known as the second platform of the Democratic party, adopted in the Chicago Convention of 1864.

The Clerk read the resolution as follows:

"Resolved, That this Convention does explicitly declare, as the sense of the American people, that after four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war, during which, under the pretense of a military necessity, of a war power higher than the Constitution, the Constitution itself has been disregarded in every part, and public liberty and private right alike trodden down, and the material prosperity of the country essentially impaired, justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare demands that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to an ultimate convention of all the States, or other peaceable means, to the end that, at the earliest practicable moment, peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal Union of the States."

Mr. MC CONAUGHEY. "Cessation of hostilities!" "Peace!" "Peace!" when the armed hosts of the rebellion, bold, insolent and defiant, were threatening the very capital of the nation, aye, thundering at its gates!

What man, or what woman, within the sound of my voice has forgotten that summer of 1864? Sir, it was a time that tried the hearts of all true men in this nation. It was a time when the most hopeful, the most loyal, the most ardent, began to doubt and to tremble with apprehension for the result. And, sir, the nations of the earth—the old monarchies and despotisms across the sea—were gazing with anxious interest, hoping for the downfall of this young republic. Then it was that the Democracy of the land, in national convention assembled, in the audience of the world, passed these resolutions, declaring them to be the sense of the American people!

But, sir, the great, loyal heart of the country repudiated and scorned them. The noble and true men of the nation rallied again, as if aroused to a new energy, and rushed to the rescue. They sustained President Lincoln nobly, with a majority of four hundred thousand votes. Again he was inaugurated President of the United States, and trusted, honored and revered by the people for his single-hearted, patriotic devotion. I desire to add, sir, in this connection, that when the Senator from Berks [Mr. DAVIS] and his *confreres* assaulted and denounced Mr. Stanton as the Secretary of War, they

assaulted and defamed the noble and sainted Lincoln. Mr. Stanton, in the conduct of the War Department, received the most hearty and constant concurrence and approval of the President. I am aware that it is within the personal knowledge of the Senator from Erie [Mr. LOWRY], that at the very period so severely criticised by the Senator from Berks, the course of Mr. Stanton in regard to the exchange of prisoners was thoroughly and cordially approved by President Lincoln. I appeal to the Senator from Erie if such is not his personal knowledge.

Mr. LOWRY. That is my personal knowledge.

Mr. MC CONAUGHEY. Then, sir, when Senators rudely assault Mr. Stanton, they attack with him the man whose name is never uttered but with love and reverence by all true sons of America. Where is the man, let his political status be what it may, who has forgotten the day that the telegraph carried throughout the whole length of this country the intelligence that a Democratic assassin had struck down the President of the United States in the capital of the nation? A thrill of horror ran throughout this land. Men sorrowed as though they had lost their brothers or their fathers. Women wept and strong men wept. And, sir, who was that man who committed this great crime? He was an insignificant actor. Individually he was nobody; but he was a representative character. He was a type of a sentiment that then actuated and pervaded many. We have a reflection of his spirit even here. He was a man with whom those who now assault Edwin M. Stanton have more sympathy than they had for President Lincoln, living or dead. It cannot be mistaken. This struggle in this Republic has been so bitter that it has gone down to the depths of the heart, and it cannot soon die out.

I have been betrayed into more than I intended to say. I rose because an honest indignation would not permit me to remain in my seat, as it was my wish to do, throughout this discussion.

Sir, I have felt every year of my life, since the rebellion was stricken down, a love and devotion for the men and the cause which

saved this Union, which deepens and grows continually stronger. What saved this country? I was nothing more or less than the action and the unfaltering devotion of the Republican party, and the true men who, loving country more than olden party ties, rushed to swell its numbers, when the war commenced. It was the great Republican party that rallied to the defense of the Government, and beneath its standard there came also such men as Geary, Stanton, and Holt, and Sickles, and Logan, and Meade, and Grant, and Butler. [Laughter on the Democratic side of the Senate.]

Mr. MC CONAUGHEY. Aye, Butler, hate him as you will, and a host of others who will not take time to enumerate. Men, sir, who, when the issue was between country and party, did not for a moment hesitate to decide for and stand by their country and against all its enemies.

And, sir, the anathemas that have proceeded from the Vatican were never so bitter as those which proceed from the Democratic party, and which are hurled by the self-constituted leaders against all who dare to prefer country before it. It required true moral courage, sir, not only to confront the enemy from without, but to break away from all the strong ties and associations of party and to brave the relentless hatred and rancor with which the Democracy pursues all who have the shameless effrontery to refuse obedience to its behests. Men who have had moral courage enough to brave and to endure all this were not the men to falter, and to palter in a double sense, when traitors in its councils proposed to destroy this Union.

Now, sir, I have simply to conclude with the remark, that, the great, glorious and patriotic heart of the country will uphold the men who fought out this war, both in the Cabinet and in the field. But, sir, although they may erect to them a monument, stone upon stone, rising and swelling in grand and beautiful proportions, until its glorious pinnacles will ever pierce above the clouds, to where eternal sunshine shall rest upon its head, yet they cannot prevent the toad and the reptile from leaving their slime upon its base.





